

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

What are the signs of swine flu?

It is very important that if someone has the classic signs of influenza — sudden onset of chills, high fever [100.3 degrees Fahrenheit], a bad headache, cough, mild nasal congestion, mild nausea, sometimes even vomiting and diarrhea — they should seek advice from their physicians. Tests can be done to determine if they have influenza, and then if they do, they may be treated with Tamiflu or Relenza, antivirals the organism is susceptible to. The goal is to treat anyone with influenza early to see if we could modify the course of the infection. The influenza virus that is spreading has been tested and is susceptible to some of the antiviral drugs we normally use.



How can we tell the difference between swine flu symptoms and those of the common cold?

Influenza is a very characteristic illness. Most viruses that produce colds produce a very little fever, and the children who have them usually don't feel too bad,; so they tend to be able to continue to play or do other things they normally would. Influenza is different. Influenza starts abruptly with hot fever, and the symptoms that we have talked about. Younger children are irritable, fussy; they don't want to do things; they want to lie around. Older children will tell you that they've got severe headaches, or muscle aches and pains, or lower-back pain — these patients with influenza look different from patients who just have a cold. Any child who has a respiratory illness with significant fever, that's a patient that needs to be seen by their physician to decide whether they need to be tested for flu.

LAPORTE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT



We will have vaccines for the novel H1N1 influenza virus available in late October 2009.

If you are under 64 and have a chronic health disorder and/or a compromised immune system, you may get the vaccine either at your physician's office or through the LaPorte County Health Department.

We will not charge for the vaccine as we have received grant funds to cover the cost of the medicine as well as the costs for us to administer the vaccine. Physician offices and hospitals may charge an administration fee, but there should be no charge for the medicine itself.

If your family includes a pregnant woman, a child under the age of six (6) months, or a person between the ages of 6 months and 24 years, please talk with them about getting the novel H1N1 vaccine themselves.

The novel H1N1 vaccine is NOT the same as the seasonal vaccine which people began getting in September 2009. Everyone eligible for the novel H1N1 vaccine can take both shots.

Grandparents and the Novel H1N1 Influenza Virus

LAPORTE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT



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Grandparents play a vital role in the community—including during the flu season.



Reports of the novel H1N1 influenza virus spreading around the world have shaken

parents and grandparents everywhere. The LaPorte County Health Department is reaching out to grandparents in our area, providing information that will help us all to keep families safer during the seasonal and H1N1 influenza season.

How does the swine flu spread, and how can we protect ourselves and our grandchildren from possible infection?

This virus spreads the same way that other strains of influenza spread. For individuals who are sick: Don't go to work, don't go to school, and don't participate in public activities. Avoid large crowds, and do frequent hand washing. Hand-washing is probably the best way to protect yourself because this virus will survive on surfaces. If you touch someone who is contaminated, you get the virus on your hands, and then if you touch your eyes or your nose or your mouth you could spread the virus.

People who are coughing or sneezing should have tissues handy, and they should sneeze into the tissue and then throw the used tissue in the trash. If no tissues are available, people should cough or sneeze into their clothing-covered elbows or inside the front of their shirt/blouse. This will help reduce the spread of the virus into the community or to the people nearby at the time.



Can we take our grandchildren to playgrounds, supermarkets, movie theatres during the flu season?

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) will update on a regular basis what's happening and provide recommendations for if we need to change what we are doing. (Visit

www.cdc.gov.) If people are staying home as they should when they are ill, then routine things that you do in a community (including taking your grandchildren to playgrounds, playdates, supermarkets, etc.) would be fine. However, if the LaPorte County Health Department has issued a request for people to not go to community playgrounds and other areas where large groups would



gather, please follow their instructions. If a grandparent is in good health, has no underlying major medical problems and normally goes out, they may continue to do that unless the Health Department makes a to the contrary.

Should we keep our grandchildren home from school and daycare?

Grandparents and family members may consider removing young children from daycare and keeping them home with Grandpa and Grandma. The LaPorte County Health Department suggests that families wait to make such a change until and unless the Health Department issues a notice regarding rising levels of absenteeism at the local schools.



How long does it take for symptoms to show?

Influenza has a very short incubation period. Usually one-to-three (1-3) days after exposure would be when you can expect symptoms to begin. The longest incubation period is probably a week.



How should grandparents prepare in case their grandchildren get infected?

Have your grandchild's pediatrician's telephone number available and what to do after hours. Also have up-to-date contact information for the children's parents. The LaPorte County Health Department recommends that all families have bottled water on hand...further suggestions may be found at www.laportecounty.org/health/health-dept/html.



If a school has been closed because cases of swine flu have been confirmed in the student body, does that mean the street or neighborhood is contaminated?

The virus will survive for a short period of time on clothing or other areas [like money] but outside in the environment, after a very short period of time, the virus is not going to be viable.

Within minutes. For example, if someone has contaminated their hand, and they touch the door of a car as they enter the car, and then somebody touches that door within five or ten minutes, the chances are that that virus is still viable. If they touch their eye or nose or mouth, then they may transmit the virus. If the second person touches the car door an hour later, there is not going to be a transference of the virus.

